



Office of the Mayor

NEWS RELEASE

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Luecke: Wooden Indian will ‘conform or cease to exist’

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Saying he has zero tolerance for any business that endangers the public or police, Mayor Stephen J. Luecke announced today that the city is actively pursuing all options to restrict, eliminate or acquire public-nuisance properties like the Wooden Indian Motel.

The Wooden Indian, 1631 Lincolnway East, was the site April 24 of a fatal shooting of South Bend Police Corporal Nick Polizzotto.

The mayor said that the city will begin by creating new comprehensive regulations governing “residence hotels,” in which patrons reside for 30 days or more. This will allow the city to tighten regulations to ensure that police, fire inspectors and code enforcement personnel have the most modern regulative tools at their disposal.

Simultaneously, the city is exploring “all options” regarding the future of the Wooden Indian property, Luecke said, adding that city officials will be meeting, this week, with private parties, public officials and the owner, Ronald E. Koehler.

“The Wooden Indian and nuisance properties like it will conform to more rigorous community standards or they will cease to exist,” Luecke said. “No civic-minded business owner need be concerned. But as owners of properties like the Bull’s Eye learned in the past, when we set our sights on a nuisance property we have the will to act to transform that location.”

After neighborhood concerns about continuing problems with criminal activity, Bull’s Eye Discount Liquors, along Lincolnway West, was acquired by the city and demolished in September 2000 to make room for a new Teachers Credit Union bank branch.

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With the recent approval of student housing across the river from the Indiana University South Bend campus, Luecke has had preliminary conversations with IUSB Chancellor Una Mae Reck about possible future development along Lincolnway East. Those conversations will continue in the coming months.

Meanwhile, Luecke has directed the city's legal staff to create regulations to present for consideration to the South Bend Common Council that would tighten existing restrictions on hotels and motels in the city. City Attorney Chuck Leone said legal staff expect to fashion regulations that would focus primarily on hotels and motels where residents stay for one month or more.

The regulations could exempt "residence hotels" that voluntarily maintain standards set by recognized national private hotel and motel associations. They would seek to bring all residence hotels up to a minimum standard. The city hopes to work with private hotel associations in defining those standards.

In addition, the mayor has instructed police to ensure that all police calls originating from the Wooden Indian or other nuisance properties be classified in a way that they appear in permanent police records – even if the call turns out to be a minor dispute that police resolve with little difficulty and without a written report.

"One way or another, the Wooden Indian property will change for the better," Luecke said.